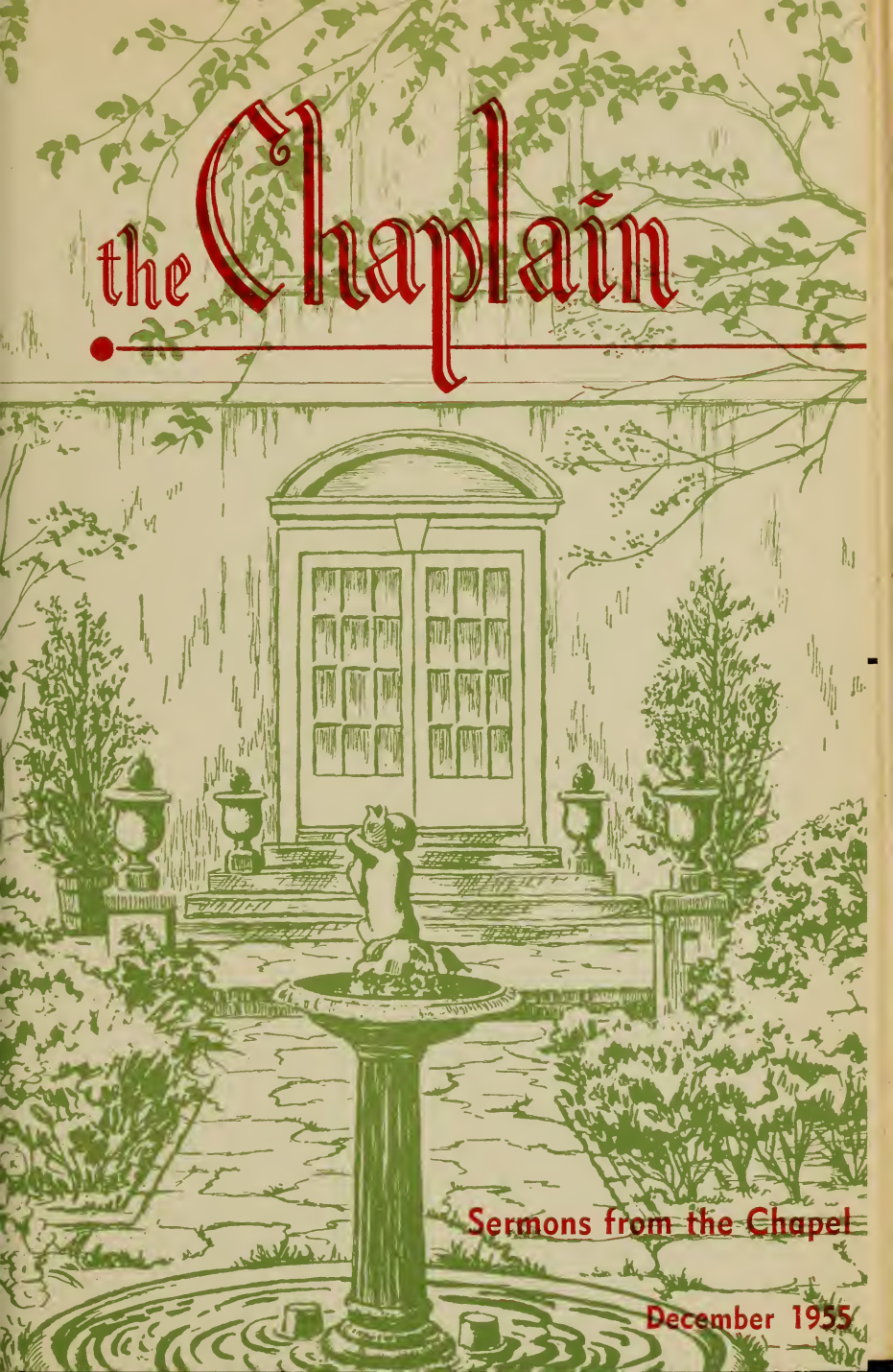
the Chaplain



Sermons from the Chapel

December 1955

A Journal for Protestant Chaplains

IN PLACE of the regular December issue of THE CHAPLAIN, the publishers present this book of chaplains' sermons, not only to greet you in a special way at Christmas, but to recognize the unique importance of the chaplain's pulpit ministry.

MARION J. CREEGER, Executive Secretary

The General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel

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Sermons from the Chapel

Sermons
FROM THE CHAPEL

Compiled by J. A. LACY
Associate Editor of THE CHAPLAIN

THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON CHAPLAINS AND
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FOREWORD

SOME three hundred sermons preached to service congregations have been received by editors of THE CHAPLAIN over the past three years. The few presented here are representative of qualities that distinguish a much larger number. It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel, to offer to military chaplains some of their own best preaching.

The pleasure derives, first of all, from the opportunity thus afforded to greet ministers of our American churches who are serving with the armed forces. Would that this Foreword might compress all the many words of appreciation spoken at every meeting of the General Commission!

The pleasure derives, further, from the quality of the sermons themselves. Simple, sincere, and clear as a bell, they bring the eternal gospel to bear on immediate human needs. To men and women in service-encountered situations these sermons speak with a directness and authenticity that, even in cold print, retains its warm appeal.

This collection of "sermons from the chapel" may have symbolic value as the expression of an emerging new ministry—the uniquely ecumenical ministry of those who live with, and preach to, persons of widely varied religious backgrounds, and of *no* religious background. The nine messages, by chaplains representing almost as many denominations, come from all branches of the service, and the Veterans Administration also. Here is indication that chaplains may be justly proud of the preaching tradition that can be maintained in their difficult, and often lonely, ministry. And here are pointers that may be helpful to fellow craftsmen as they shape their preaching to new and challenging situations.

Beyond the obvious appeal, however, to service personnel and fellow chaplains, these sermons have something to say to a third group of people. Home churches will find here an eloquent witness to the effective preaching ministry made available through chaplains to their members in the armed forces.

Finally, Chaplain Charles I. Carpenter's discerning sermon,

preached on the recent occasion of his receiving an honorary D.D. degree from Bucknell University, forms an Appendix to this collection because it also stands as a symbol. It is symbolic, not only of the message each of you preaches, but also of the honor in which we of the home churches hold all of you who both live and preach the gospel of "the Word made flesh," to the glory of God and the strengthening of human lives.

FRED S. BUSCHMEYER
Chairman, The General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel

New York, New York

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RICHARD FROTHINGHAM

Christmas Away from Home

CHRISTMAS is a happy time for almost everybody. For the young, there's a visit from Santa Claus, who fills stockings by the chimney and spreads out presents under the tree. For many adults, there are holiday reunions with family and friends.

Sometimes a year rolls round when we cannot know Christmas as a time of reunion with loved ones. Even then the memories of other years may bring some measure of joy.

But another side to the Christmas celebration is open to us always, wherever we may be. This is the keeping of Christmas as a religious holiday or "holy day."

Christmas is sometimes called "The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord," or "the birthday of Christ." On this day we commemorate the wonderful truth that in the birth of Christ, the Word of God became flesh and came to dwell among men.

This is the deepest meaning of the Christmas holiday. We can all take part in the *religious* celebration of Christmas no matter what the circumstances of our lives may be.

I

We are not the first ones to spend the holidays far from home and friends. There has never been a year since Christmas was first celebrated when this has not been so for some Christians. In cases like this, Christmas depends on what we make of it. We can bemoan our separation from those we love and let the holiday season become spoiled for us. On the other hand, with the social aspects of Christmas at a minimum, we may concentrate on the religious meaning of the holidays all the more and find the season richer than ever in spiritual meaning.

A few years after the close of our War Between the States, a young American clergyman found himself in a foreign country, far from familiar surroundings, far from those he knew and loved. On Christmas Eve he left the little town where he was

staying and strolled out into the countryside. By the light of the stars he looked down on the town from the top of a little hill.

A sad and lonely way to spend Christmas Eve, you say? Ah, but the clergyman was Phillips Brooks, and the foreign country was Palestine. The little town was Bethlehem, and the countryside was the region where "there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

A year later Brooks was back in the United States, back at his parish in Philadelphia. Christmas Eve was coming round again, and Brooks looked back and remembered that night in the Holy Land. He was inspired by his recollections to write what has become one of the best loved of all Christmas hymns:

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

No Christmas hymn does a better job of applying the Christmas message to the needs of men in the modern world. The church has been greatly enriched by this product of the lonely Christmas Eve that Phillips Brooks spent on a hillside far from home.

II

I myself have never spent a Christmas in Palestine. But I have spent several away from home, including two in foreign countries. Of these, the most vivid for me is Christmas 1944, which I spent doing guard duty in a little town in England.

My outfit was quartered in factory buildings that had been converted into barracks. On the whole, the winter in England was milder than winters I had been used to in the northeastern United States. But this was a very cold night, so that I shivered and had to keep moving in order to keep warm.

There were civilian homes near us, and civilians were in our area all the time. On Christmas Eve some young boys came along caroling. I could hear them in the distance. They stopped directly in front of our barracks and gave a performance for us. One boy,

whose voice had not changed yet, gave a beautiful solo number. The GI's in the building took up a collection of candy bars and came out and gave them to that boy. I heard him crying out with enthusiasm: "Oh, thank you, sir: thank you very much, sir!" Then the boys split up their haul and went farther down the street.

The boy had sung as a solo one of the Christmas hymns more widely used in England than in our country:

> While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
> All seated on the ground,
> The angel of the Lord came down,
> And glory shone around.

You can understand how moved I was to hear that hymn while I was on guard duty in the little English village. For I, too, was spending my time "keeping watch . . . by night." I felt very close to the shepherds of the Christmas story, and the great experiences they had that wonderful night became very real for me.

III

There is something else I recollect about Christmas 1944. The days following Christmas were days of anxiety for me. We heard a report that on Christmas Eve an enemy submarine in the English Channel had sunk an Allied ship carrying units of the American 66th Division. I had a close friend in the 66th Division, and naturally I was concerned for his safety.

This friend had been drafted into the Army two weeks ahead of me, February 1944. We had been separated during basic training. Then he was shipped to Camp Rucker, Alabama, two weeks before I arrived at the same camp. We were both at Camp Rucker for about four months, and then his outfit shipped out for Europe two weeks ahead of mine. We had been unable to get together in England. And now came this report that his outfit had been torpedoed in the Channel.

I finally heard from my friend. He was at the front in France. Because of censorship, he could not write directly about the sinking; but he did mention it indirectly by remarking that he had had a Christmas Eve he would never forget.

It was not until I saw my friend in the United States after the war that I learned the full story of the sinking of the Belgian

transport ship, the "Leopoldville." I was sitting in an armchair in my friend's home, and he told me how the torpedo had hit the ship just a few miles out of a French port. He told me how only one man survived from the compartment where the torpedo exploded; all the rest were either killed by the explosion itself or drowned by the water that came in. Others who jumped overboard were drowned. Some men jumped into the water with their steel helmets on and the bands around their chins, and their necks were snapped. Rescue ships came out, and some soldiers, who missed their step in trying to jump from one ship to another, were crushed between the sides. From all causes, the death toll was high in the hundreds. It was the second worst Allied troop transport disaster in the entire war.

And it occurred while I was walking my post in England and listening to the carolers.

IV

In looking back, I am struck by the thought of how that tragedy seems to jar with the "glad tidings of great joy" which are at the center of the Christmas message. The Christmas season was over, of course, before regretful telegrams from the War Department reached the next of kin of the victims of the "Leopoldville" disaster. But soon another year rolled round, and another Christmas season revived painful memories for those whose loved ones perished on Christmas Eve, 1944. What consolation could Christmas have for the sorrowing and the broken in heart?

Now was Christmas of 1944 the only one that brought pain to the hearts of men and women? The tragedies of life do not take a holiday during the holiday season. Not a year passes in which there is not pain for some souls during the happiest of seasons. This has been so since the first Christmas. For soon after the birth of Christ the season was marred by the Massacre of the Innocents, the slaughter of the babies of Bethlehem by the soldiers of Herod. We are told that Simeon warned Mary a sword would one day pierce her heart, with the pain of her Son's death on the cross.

How can Christmas remain a joyful season in face of all the continuing pains and sorrows and troubles of life?

Our consolation is symbolized in one of the Christmas titles of Christ: "Emmanuel." This literally means "God with us." The

Hebrew name reminds us that God is with us in Christ his Son.

We are reminded at this season of the year that God is not distant and cold and aloof and unconcerned about men. Rather, God loves us with the love of a Father for his children. God was with us in the person of Christ his Son. In Christ, the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, to share our life, and work for our redemption. In Christ, God was taking on himself all the suffering of life, that by sharing our life he might draw us closer to himself.

For trouble such as men must bear
From childhood to four-score,
He shared with us, that we might share
His joy forevermore.

No pang that tears the human heart today is unknown to Christ. And because Christ shared our life, he can speak to every human need.

There is cause for sorrow at Christmas, as at every other time of the year. But there is greater cause for joy because of the wonderful blessings which came to us through the birth and life and death of God's Son.

Christ on earth was Emmanuel, "God with us"—God with us in the flesh, God sharing our earthly life. But Christ in glory is still "God with us" in spirit. Through the prayers of our spirits we may draw close to him and remain close to him always.

Though there was no room for his parents in the inn, we can make room for him in our hearts. He who once shared our sorrows and sufferings can drive them out of our lives and replace them with tidings of joy.

ROBERT E. HARGIS

The Great Doors of a Young Man's Life

WHEREVER we go, it is plain that we live in a world of doors. Most of them lie within our power to open. From earliest childhood, doors tug at our curiosity.

They can do many things, these doors! They can shut you in and embrace you in the warmth of a home and a fireside, separating you from all the frustrations of the day. Or they can shut you out and make you an alien and an outcast, unwanted and unloved. But doors are deceiving, and the art of discriminating between the important doors and the unimportant ones is one of the secrets of living successfully.

Suppose we take a look at a man who, it seems to me, discovered the secret of opening and entering the right doors. He moves like a whirlwind through the pages of the New Testament, leaving the impression wherever he goes that he has "turned the world upside down." This stormy personality is Paul, the great apostle, and it is he who gives us our text for this message. As he sits down to complete a letter he has been writing to some of his Christian friends in the city of Corinth, he says this: "I will stay in Ephesus . . . , for a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

That's a tremendous way to look at life!

Enemies? Of course. . . . But a GREAT DOOR HAS OPENED TO ME!

Obstacles? Certainly. . . . But a GREAT DOOR IS OPEN!

Danger? What of it? I have this chance to serve God!

There may be riots. Let them come! There may be a whole procession of troubles. Let the procession come! Suppose I should even be called upon to lay down my life? Then let me die! FOR A GREAT DOOR IS OPENED TO ME! I will stay in Ephesus.

Let us make one thing quite clear. This man's greatness does not lie in the size of his opportunities, but in the magnificence of his choices. His chance for stature then was no better than yours

is now. He simply recognized a great door and was willing to go through fire, if that should be necessary, to enter it.

Here, then, is the simple fact. Let's face it! THERE ARE GREAT DOORS THAT OPEN TO EVERY MAN.

I

Without any question, one of the great doors of a young man's life is the *Door of Memory.*

This is the quiet door. It opens silently, moving on noiseless hinges without a sound. When we least expect it, there it is, swinging open to remind us of the days that have gone by—opening and then shutting again without our asking.

It has a way, this Door of Memory, of opening widest when we are standing a dogwatch or waiting on some foreign shore for the first pale shafts of morning to slash the dark banner of night. And through this quiet door we see "home" and those we love, and memories come marching to meet us and to keep us steady and true.

This is the door that opens silently when the room is black with profanity and when obscene rottenness pushes in on us and claws at our souls, shouting at us to give in, quit, capitulate, throw in the sponge!

This is the door the Prodigal Son could never keep shut. He tried hard enough. He tried to put up bars, to barricade it, to make it secure; but it kept pushing away the furniture he had stacked against it—kept opening.

When Jesus recounted the story of that turbulent young man, he said that the boy asked for "his inheritance," and then, upon getting his share of his father's goods, he "gathered all together and took his journey into a far country." He thought that he had left everything behind except what he had stuffed into his knapsack.

But I wonder if he really came away from home as scot-free as that? I wonder if anybody can? The trouble was—there were those constant memories that kept bursting open the door of yesterday and clamoring for him to listen to them and look at them.

The sound of his father's voice, and his iron-gray hair, the soft laughter of his mother, his easygoing big brother rounding up

the cattle at sunset, the well-mannered servants, the hurt expression on his father's face the day he left home: it was this door that, always opening . . . and opening . . . in the night hours, finally brought him to himself and brought him home again from the pigsty.

For you, too, this quiet Door of Memory can become one of the greatest sources of strength. Where *do* you go for light in your dark hours, for strength in your weakness?

"Well," you reply, "I can't go to my past for help—not to my memory—there are far too many things that I don't want to remember."

Well, of course. Which one of us doesn't face that? Paul had some things he didn't like to remember, too. Memories that, before his conversion, had chased him along streets and around corners.

There was the memory of Stephen, for one. Stephen haunted Paul. You would have tried to forget, too, if you had been standing there that summer day, holding the coats of angry men with hate in their eyes—if you had heard the clear voice of Stephen crying out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"—if you had seen his face, radiant, as though heaven itself were shining upon it—if you had seen him go down under the stones while you just stood there, saying nothing, doing nothing. Well, would *you* want to remember Stephen? This would have haunted Paul always but for the grace of Jesus Christ, which transformed this nightmare of a memory into a new life.

Now the miracle had happened. There was a new man now. Once he was a killer of Christians—and the more, the better. Now he was a man whose happiest hours were those spent with a little band of Christians—Christians like Stephen—in a little room or on a river bank. His memory was his secret weapon now: the shame was transformed into sinews of strength. No wonder that we sing those words:

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,
O Saviour of mankind!

II

Suppose we leave this quiet Door of Memory now while we take a look about us at some of the other great doors in human life. Some of them do not move on such silent hinges.

Which one of us, for instance, has not confronted the ***Door of Temptation?*** This is the painted door. Probably it is the gaudy door in your life. It is in mine. Nobody has much trouble finding it. It is well marked. Neon signs blaze about it. The sound of loud laughter cascades merrily from somewhere behind it. There is the tinkle of glasses and seductive music.

The outside of the Door of Temptation is never shoddy. It is well kept in fresh new colors. We never see the shabby side until we have spent the night on the other side of it and start to come out in the morning.

Maybe you've walked along New York's brightly lit Broadway some Saturday night. It's a splendid, unforgettable sight, with fantastic combinations of light and color—just as if some giant hand had sprinkled a hundred broken rainbows up and down the street. There is nothing shabby about Broadway at midnight. But have you ever seen Broadway at six o'clock on Sunday morning? I did once. It was last summer. I walked down the street that had been a wonderland at midnight. But at six o'clock on Sunday morning it was a tawdry, threadbare, filthy place.

Or take the writer of Genesis, the very first book in your Bible. *He* knew about this painted door. Do you know what he says about it? "Sin," he says, "is couching at the door."

We might even change "couching" to "crouching"; for the meaning is "lying in wait," or "lurking," eager to spring. Just inside the painted door there is a tiger crouching. Muscles tensed. Fangs bared. Ready to leap at your throat.

Or listen to Peter, who came away from his nets and his boats and followed Christ. He was a man's man, all six feet of him. Hear him! "Be alert," he says, "because your enemy the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking those he may devour." He knew about this painted door.

Or come, if you will, into the amphitheater at Smyrna and watch with the bloodthirsty mob as white-haired Polycarp, stately

and impressive in his eighty-sixth year, is led into the crowded arena. Around you a savage cry roars out as the people see him. Do you think he has never faced the painted door? Listen! He faces it now as the proconsul, Quadratus, steps down and leans over the balustrade, calling out to him, impressed with his bearing and his age. There is a hush as the hand of the Roman proconsul is raised. He speaks.

"What harm can there be in saying, 'Caesar is Lord,' and offering incense to him? Revile Christ, and I shall release you."

There is a pause as Polycarp sees the painted Door of Temptation beckoning him.

Then in a strong voice he speaks so that everyone can hear: "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"

He does not speak again as they lead him away—away to the stake and the flames. And Quadratus slowly returns to his official box.

How attractive that door of escape must have looked to this early Christian! "To live! To live these few extra years—how good it would be!" No doubt such thoughts flooded through his mind. But even the scribe who wrote down the thrilling account of his death knew that he was right in turning his back on the painted door. He concludes the tale this way: "The blessed Polycarp was martyred the seventh day before the Kalends of March. Statius Quadratus was proconsul, but Jesus Christ rules forever!"

The painted door is present in your personal life, and you have to face it every day. It is present in politics when expediency beckons a nation to forget its principles and its ideals and embrace as a partner a ruthless and godless nation. You will come upon it often—probably today.

III

I should like to suggest that one more great door in almost every young man's life is the ***Door of Tomorrow***. This is a glass door. It opens to the east, and the sunrise pours through it morning by morning. It is a door of hope, of new chances, of thrilling opportunities. Through this glass door a man can see his dreams for the better days ahead. His air castles are built out there, be-

yond the glass door—castles for which he may even today be building the foundations. You will recall that I said this is a door in "*almost* every young man's life." A few of us may never go beyond this glass door.

In the story *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* a young man, whose success as an author is matched only by his failure as a person, lies outside his tent in Africa with a killing infection in his legs—an infection that began with only a scratch from a thorn. He has already been close to death. He knows that his life hangs in a delicate balance, and as the perspiration beads out on his face he mumbles, "You never know when the door will open, . . . and death has been standing there all the time."

Just so! For some of us there may never be a glass Door of Tomorrow. The unseen door of death may open first. But for most of us this glass door is "a great door" with "many adversaries."

I wonder what you see beyond the glass Door of Tomorrow? Dr. James Allen Francis once said that "life now is always a prophecy of what is beyond." We can't escape that! What we take now, we shall pay for tomorrow. You sow one thing today, and in a few weeks you get the same thing right back—bushels of it!

I hope you see something really great out there beyond the glass Door of Tomorrow. We really have just begun to live. As Charles E. Wilson, secretary of defense, said about our national economy: "We haven't reached the peak. You haven't seen anything yet." I think that can be said about all of life by men who have a deep faith in the future and an abiding faith in God. I think that's what Jesus meant when he said to his worried disciples that they should do "greater works than these." There's more! We haven't reached the peak! You haven't seen anything yet!

Gladstone had a young friend who said to him on one occasion: "If I had lived in your generation, I would have done great things too."

To this Gladstone replied: "No, . . . if you do not see in your own generation things that need to be done, you would not have seen anything to do in mine either." I think he had something there.

Of course, if you'll let him do it, God will personally lead you

through this glass Door of Tomorrow into things you never dreamed were possible. Not for you, at least!

Well, why not for you? After our Lord had been crucified, the disciples were hiding together in an upstairs room like scared rabbits. He came to them after his resurrection, "the doors being shut." And somehow—who knows how he did it?—he walked with them through the glass Door of Tomorrow, showing them that life was not all over. Hardly! It had just begun! And they went out of that place fearless—transformed—touched with a strange new power they had never known before. And they walked straight into tomorrow—tomorrow with its new miracles—tomorrow with its new Gethsemanes, with its new crosses.

God leaves tomorrow with us because, oddly enough, he believes in us.

He believes in you—in every one of you.

IV

So we come to the last door. I'm sure the apostle Paul was thinking of this when he wrote about the "great door" that was facing him. This is the ***Door of Dedication.*** Across the solid breadth of it runs an iron bolt. It has been shot securely home into the socket of the doorjamb. It defies passage from without. You alone can slide the bolt back. This is the bolted door. Strange, is it not, that this door alone, of all the doors of life, should be bolted?

No man can bolt the Door of Memory. There is no lock on the Door of Temptation. And tomorrow comes on steadily, and you cannot hold it back. But the Door of Dedication—how alone it stands! A man may keep it bolted for a lifetime if he wishes.

This is the door about which another disciple of Jesus Christ spoke. He had seen it. He had heard Someone knocking on the outside of it. There was a voice, too—or was he just dreaming when he heard the voice say, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in . . ."?

This door has no crowds pushing through it. There are no bands playing, no flags waving. But now and then a man will approach the door, listen for a moment; then square his shoulders, lift his head, and, reaching out, slide back the great bolt and step

back as the door comes slowly open. And there, just as he suspected, stands One whose head is crowned with thorns, and who holds out hands that bear the print of nails, and whose countenance is like unto the Son of God. Then together they walk out into a wider world.

There is nothing even a little bit easy about choosing this door. It is not the popular one. Jesus said as much to a man who once wanted to pull back the bolt of the Door of Dedication. He told him plainly, "You don't stand a ghost of a chance of getting rich this way. . . . I haven't even a place to lie down at night, or a pillow to put my head on." To another he said, "If you want to come, all right, but there is to be no looking back!"

You have this chance; this great door confronts you too. But you can open it only on Christ's terms—on this condition, and this, and this. It is something like the day when Wellington had defeated the enemy in a great battle and the commanding officers of the beaten army were standing about making generous and flattering comments about Wellington's prowess as a military genius. Breaking into the conversation, Wellington said abruptly: "I appreciate your compliments; but, gentlemen, this is a surrender! Give me your swords!" Just so! This Door of Dedication awaits every man here, but it involves surrender.

Among the men who have unbolted this door, Leland Stanford is a rare example. At the very zenith of his success as the first president of the Southern Pacific Railroad and a leading figure in the California political scene, with little warning his seventeen-year-old son died. The blow was overwhelming. He was the Stanfords' only child. They had looked forward eagerly to giving him the finest education that money could buy, and to a brilliant life of success and usefulness. Now the boy was gone, and bitter sorrow crushed the father.

For days he couldn't get hold of himself. Sometimes he would hear when he was spoken to; then again he wouldn't hear. Even Mrs. Stanford couldn't get through the wall of grief.

Then one evening they walked at sunset out across their Palo Alto Ranch and stood quietly on a little knoll. Mrs. Stanford said: "Leland, dear, we wanted to give our boy the finest education possible, but God has taken him away. We must not now give up and stop living. Why don't we make all the boys of Cali-

fornia our boys and here on this ranch provide a place where the sons of California can have the finest education in the world?"

He didn't seem to hear her words. Days later he asked her: "Did you at some time or other say something about making all the boys of California our boys?"

"Why," she said innocently, "I think that's a fine idea!"

Leland Stanford thought a moment and then said: "How can we build a university? We aren't educators; we're railroad people."

"Never mind, Leland," Mrs. Stanford replied, "you'll find some way to do it."

There followed a study of American universities . . . and a trip to Harvard to see Dr. Elliott.

"Dr. Elliott," Stanford began, "how much would it cost to remove Harvard University building by building and stone by stone and set it down on my ranch at Palo Alto?"

There was a deathly silence as the blood drained from Dr. Elliott's face and left it white and blanched. In almost a whisper Dr. Elliott said, "Would you mind repeating that question, my good man? What on earth are you talking about?"

And with that, Leland Stanford launched into an account of his plans for building another Harvard on the West Coast.

Leland Stanford had confronted the Door of Dedication and was passing through it.

With the years, the dream has come true. Stanford University stands witness to it in Palo Alto, and the nation has been blessed by the dedication of Leland Stanford, who saw a great door before him and had the courage not to turn away.

Now what of you?

When you sing the hymn and leave the sanctuary, these great and decisive doors will be waiting. You will all pass through some of them in spite of yourselves. I wonder what would happen if—but then, I almost forgot: you alone can slide the bolt back on that door. Perhaps you'll do it!

You can be sure of this much: If you do step through that last door—the Door of Dedication—you will hear Someone falling into step with you. And you'll look up. And he'll be there, walking beside you!

PAUL F. ERICKSON

Sowing and Reaping

GO tell my boy!" This was the compelling title of a tract that recently arrested my attention. Here was voiced the earnest though rarely spoken plea of fathers and mothers everywhere. "Go tell my boy—yes, and my daughter too—tell them of the values that endure; tell them of the things that count; tell them what belongs to their peace."

Long years ago St. Paul wrote: *"Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."* Here is a law that applies to more than farming. It is wisdom for living life well.

I

When I was a boy, I grew up on a small farm in central California. Part of the farm had been a pasturage for years. Then one day my father decided he would plow up that pasture and turn it into an orchard. But he knew it would be hard to get rid of the Bermuda grass. For the first year he would have to be satisfied with a temporary crop. So he planted the plowed-up pasture in pumpkins and watermelons. You can imagine the kind of harvest we got from that well-fertilized field. The pumpkins were the largest I have seen, the watermelons the sweetest I have tasted.

Now when my father planted pumpkin and watermelon seed, he knew that he would reap a harvest in kind. Were that not so, farming would be altogether capricious and chaotic. The farmer knows he can depend upon the certain operation of the law that is written by the divine Creator into the very structure of seed and soil—that as a man sows, so he will also reap. If he sows wheat, he will reap wheat: if he sows corn, he will reap corn; and if he sows watermelon seed, he will reap a harvest in kind.

If this is true in relation to seed and soil, it is likewise true on the far higher levels of human life, and human character, and

human destiny. For just as the Creator has written a dependable law into the structure of seed and soil, so has he also written a similar law into the structure of our lives. To know this and to live in accordance with it, to sow in the field of life the seeds of sincere motive and of honest and good deed—this is life's supreme wisdom. And the contrary is equally true. To sow to the flesh is life's deepest folly. For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Years ago my gentle mother stated the negative aspect of this wisdom. One of us children had thoughtlessly repeated some bit of unsavory gossip. With a pained look on her face, my mother turned to us and said: "Children, you must never repeat anything like that. Some day it will come back to you."

At the time we did not understand what she meant. How could gossip "come back" to us? The years, however, have brought deepened insight. What we say and do has a way of coming back to us. We reap what we sow. If we sow the seeds of gossip about others, we shall sooner or later become the objects of gossip. If we sow hatred, we shall be hated by someone else. If we sow an unforgiving spirit, we shall not know the grace of pardon. If we sow falsehood and disloyalty, we shall reap in kind. And he who sows to the flesh will reap a harvest of corruption.

On the other hand, if we sow the good seed of sincere motive and honest deed, we shall reap a harvest of life. If we sow kindness, we shall receive kindness. If we sow forgiveness, we, too, shall be forgiven. If we sow truth, we shall reap faithfulness. If we sow faith, the harvest will be the knowledge of God. "He who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Moreover, this law is as dependable in relation to ourselves as it is in our relationship to others. If we sow compassion, we become more compassionate. If we sow self-discipline, we become strong in character. If we sow conscientious devotion to duty, we become men of faith and honor. But if we sow deception, we become liars; and if we sow impurity, we become degenerate. If we sow evil, we shall reap a harvest of dishonor; but if we sow nobly, we shall enter into life.

II

This counsel from St. Paul about sowing and reaping was begotten in deep experience of this law of life and written in love and compassion for his fellow men. Some years ago I felt that when he wrote: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap," his mood was one of sternness and severity. But I no longer believe that such was the case. Rather do I feel that he wrote the words with a catch in his throat.

Think for a moment of the Apostle's past life. In earlier years he had been known as Saul of Tarsus, the impassioned enemy and persecutor of the Christians. He had gone from city to city ferreting out the followers of Christ and having them thrown into prison. His fierce opposition to the Christian faith is bluntly stated in the book of Acts: "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters . . . , so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

Paul himself confesses, "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women."

Thus Paul sowed in the field of his life the persecution and the imprisonment of the Christians.

Then came the day when Paul, on his way to the city of Damascus to persecute the Christians there, felt the impact of the reality and the claim of Christ in a great hour of vision. He yielded his life to the Lord and henceforth became a changed man, the most consecrated missionary of the Cross the world has ever known. Now he sowed continuously the seeds of repentance and faith in Christ, the seeds of devotion to God and his will, the seeds of humility and trust, of compassion and service.

From this sowing of repentance and faith, of devotion to God and of service to men, Paul reaped a rich harvest in kind. But this later sowing of repentance and faith and service did not cancel out his earlier sowing of the seeds of persecution and imprisonment of the Christians, although the nature and effect of this harvest was greatly altered by his changed life.

As Paul had sown, so he was to reap. In his own life as a Christian, he experienced the continued persecution of the enemies of the Cross. Likewise he came to know the suffering of long imprisonment. As he had sown, so he reaped.

Now, to be sure, for Paul, as for every Christian, the judgment of God became the mercy of God. Persecution and imprisonment brought him closer to the heart of God and resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. Nevertheless, as he had sown, so he reaped; and thus out of his own experience of this abiding moral and spiritual law he wrote, in deep humility and in great compassion, this word about sowing and reaping.

III

A striking illustration of this law of life was seen aboard one of our Navy transports on Christmas Eve of 1951. Our transport was returning from the Far East with large numbers of men aboard, many of whom had seen long months of rugged combat in Korea. Sunday, the day before Christmas Eve, found us a day out of San Francisco. We knew that we should arrive at the lightship about midnight. Hence we expected to anchor in the bay and to dock at Fort Mason the following morning.

To our surprise, we were ordered to proceed to the dock without delay in order that the men might be speeded home for the Christmas holidays.

As we approached San Francisco that night, many happy men crowded the deck. As they looked up at the Golden Gate Bridge arching overhead, that lighted span was to them the symbol of their homes—the homes to which they now were returning after the heartache and the heartbreak of war. They had seen their comrades killed in action, and others had been terribly wounded. Somehow they had been spared.

These men had come through other perils as well. In the loneliness of Korea, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their morale often low, they had been tempted over and over again to allow some bar-fly, or some loose woman of the streets, to pin a yellow tag on their souls marked "Damaged goods, for sale cheap, any price." But something down deep within them had spoken a decisive "No." They remembered a loved face; they remembered their honor; they remembered God. Now as they looked

up to that lighted Golden Gate span, they realized that the pay-off was greater than they had ever dreamed. For every moral victory they had won in Japan and Korea, they were now gaining a thousandfold reward. They had sown the seeds of integrity and faithfulness. Now the harvest of happiness was greater than they had dared hope. These men were coming back right, coming back the way they had dreamed they would return when they had left long months before. And so their hearts sang a happy Christmas song that night.

These men remind me of an appealing picture I saw some time ago. A serviceman is returning from duty overseas. His young wife is waiting for him with outstretched arms as she stands on the porch of their small home. A two-year-old boy is running down the walk to welcome home his daddy, who stoops down to gather the little fellow in his arms.

It was the caption of the picture, however, that arrested my attention. These were the words: "Greet her with a clean heart. Lift him with clean hands." And those men, standing on the deck of our transport that Christmas Eve, knew they could do that. So they were happy men—men with a song in their souls.

We had other men aboard who were *not* happy. Some were not going home for Christmas. They were in the syphilis wards and were to be transferred to military hospitals for further treatment. In addition to these, there were long lines of men—eighty and ninety every morning—waiting outside of sick bay for penicillin and other wonder drugs. As they stood there with a dejected look on their faces, they knew that although they might be cured of their venereal disease, no penicillin or any other wonder drug could heal the hurt of their souls.

One's heart went out to them. It is only when a man is deeply sorry for his sin that the grace of God can restore him, and even then there are bitter regrets and deep scars on the soul. These men had sown to the flesh, and now they were reaping a harvest of corruption both of body and of soul. While other men had chosen a song, these had chosen a serpent that tortured their souls.

And so this law of sowing and reaping is continuously at work in human life and character and destiny. This law our parents have sought to teach us. It has been their finest legacy. Their deepest concern is that we shall sow the seeds of sincere motive, of

faith in Christ, of devotion to God and his will; the seeds of self-discipline, of humility and integrity and kindly deed.

Today with one voice they say again, "Go tell my boy!" That he may know the things that count and choose the values that endure, go tell my boy this: "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." Tell him that to sow to the Spirit is life and joy and peace.

HERMAN J. KREGEL

The Man Who Went over the Hill

YESTERDAY'S hero—tomorrow's heel!" How often have we heard that remark! Some of us may have experienced its bitter bite in our own lives. And when this has been our lot, how often have we been tempted to desert everything and take off over the hill!

The remarkable thing about life is that such an experience is so common. In feeling sorry for ourselves we are inclined to murmur that nobody ever had troubles as bad as ours. More than one great man has expressed the same idea. And our scripture lesson (I Kings 19:1-18) shows the pattern that has recurred time and time again since that day 2800 years ago when the prophet Elijah sat under a juniper tree and wished he were dead.

His country, his friends—yes, even his God—hadn't done right by him; and as far as he was concerned, they could have it and he was through! Instead of the reward he felt he had coming, he was getting a reprimand. Instead of sitting in the driver's seat, he was being driven out of town and was fleeing for the life he said he didn't care to keep.

A soldier goes over the hill; an officer sulks or takes it out on his underlings; a civilian ducks and chucks his civic or domestic responsibilities, or quits his job to cut off his nose to spite his face; a wife takes it out on her husband or children or whoever is unlucky enough to catch the backwash and backlash of her irritation. In short, all of us, in one way or another, may go "over the hill"—or at the very least make life miserable for ourselves and others—when instead of recognition for a job well done, we get the short end of the stick instead.

If there ever was a clear-cut picture of "yesterday's hero—tomorrow's heel," it was the prophet Elijah after his great day on Mount Carmel. He had been struggling to keep his country from going over completely to the evil worship of Baal. There were really few men braver than he. Elijah had proved his courage by

standing alone against a wicked queen and the four hundred idolatrous priests who were fawning in her favor. He had won a great victory on the mountain, and now he felt that he had the right to march down to the capital and claim his honors.

He had expected to find a chastened queen and, instead, found a tigress baring her claws and threatening vengeance and death! The reward he was about to face was so different from what he had rightfully expected that he was taken aback in surprise—and he started running for his life before he had taken the time to think the thing through.

And the more he ran, the greater his fear grew. Once we start running from a thing, it doesn't take long for molehills to look like mountains.

Getting down in the dumps is no unique experience in anyone's life—we all get that way some time or other. The big difference between people lies in what we let it do to us. So often the world seems to go completely haywire. Instead of a boon for a job we've done well, we get a boot in a tender spot; instead of praise, we get bawled out. *And it just isn't fair!*

Elijah fled after the greatest victory of his career and was seeming to lose what should have been his greatest opportunity. He quit cold and took off over the hill. Somehow, he just couldn't wait.

I'll never forget a tragedy that occurred in my home state. Mario Pacetti, a student at the University of Wisconsin, was one of the greatest athletes the state had ever produced. He had set his heart on an appointment to West Point. Something happened, and it looked as if the appointment was not going to come through. I don't know what other worries Mario had, but, whatever they were, he let them get him down so badly that he did what no man has any moral right to do. He committed suicide.

The morning following his death the mail man delivered the notification of his appointment to the Academy. . . . If he had only waited!

The prophet Elijah was tired and disappointed after his strenuous ordeal on Mount Carmel—and when we feel that way, it's always harder to take what seems to be a bad break. But the greatest fault and weakness of Elijah, as yours and mine most of the time, was his eclipse of faith. He had permitted the figure of

Jezebel to loom so large on his horizon that it had eclipsed his vision of God.

Elijah under the juniper tree and wishing he were dead! Here he had been fleeing desperately to save his life, and now he says he wishes he were dead! That makes just about as much sense as many of the things we do. He was probably just talking through his hat, like a lot of us in our brooding moments when we say things we really don't mean.

And isn't it a good thing that God doesn't always make our words and wishes come true?

I remember reading a story by the late Dr. Henry C. Link about a patient who came to him one day and asked for an easy way to commit suicide. The patient said he had a weak heart; so Link suggested that every night before retiring, instead of sitting down to read or listen to the radio, he go outside and run around the block. Before long, the doctor told him, he'd drop dead.

So the fellow tried it, but he got tired and slowed down a bit. The next night he tried it again, running a bit farther; but he got tired again and stopped.

Well, before he knew it, he found his health improving. He was enjoying his evening jaunts and was beginning to get a kick out of life. How glad he must have been that his earlier wish to die had not been granted!

While Elijah was running away, he had probably not given God a thought except to gripe and grumble at him, and God had let him pretty much alone. Then when he finally sat in front of a cave on Mount Horeb, having had some food and rest, God began to call Elijah to account, saying: "Elijah, what are you doing here?"

What a silly question! Of course God knew right well why he was there. And Elijah had a ready answer for him! (Don't we all?) Elijah reminded God that he had been working very hard for him and had done more than anyone really had a right to expect. Then in pious faultfinding he continued to remind God that God and everyone else had let him down and he was the only one left in all Israel who even cared what happened. "And now look at *me!*"

Elijah had put too much confidence in the miracle on Carmel, impressive as that was; and God had to teach his runaway prophet

the strength of quietness and patience and trust. Elijah had been too impressed by bigness and by the outward appearances of things, not discerning how God works quietly all the while. So now God ordered Elijah to the top of the mountain to await his coming. And along came the mighty wind and the earthquake and the fire—but God was not in them. Then came the still small voice—and God was in the still small voice, asking again, "Elijah, what are you doing here?"

Elijah went through his same ritual of complaint, but with a lot less enthusiasm, I'm sure. He was learning that there are mightier forces at work in the world than physical might.

God then gave Elijah something to do. He told him to get back to work. Thus the best cure in the world for discouragement and disappointment began to go into operation. And the job he assigned him was no small task. He sent him to change the dynasties of two nations!

I think there's a good lesson for us in the army in this job assignment given to Elijah. There are some who seem to think that all you have to do to keep a man's mind off desertion is to keep him busy, even if it's only with "make work" like digging holes and filling them up again.

I once read a story about that sort of thing:

A psychologist wanted to try an experiment. He hired a man for yard work and gave him an ax.

"Do you see that log lying there?"

The man nodded.

"I want you to make like you're chopping wood; only I want you to use the *back* side of the ax, not the blade. I'll give you three dollars an hour."

The hired man thought the psychologist was crazy; but the pay sounded good, so he set to work.

After a couple of hours he knocked on the back door. The psychologist came and asked what he wanted.

"Mister, I'm quitting this job!"

"What's the matter; don't you like the pay you're getting? If it isn't enough, I'll raise your wages."

"No, mister," he replied; "the pay is good enough; but *when I chop wood, I've got to see the chips fly!*"

Well, God gave Elijah a real job. He could make the chips fly,

all right. But, also, God had to remind Elijah that he was not the only person left in the whole world who was trying to do the right thing.

When we're away from home and in strange places like the army, I think we often get that sort of feeling. We see things and hear things we don't want any part of, and then we, too, begin to wonder if we're the only ones left.

So God told Elijah to anoint his successor, reminding him again that he was not the only person in the world who could do God's work, but that he, like everyone else, was but another link in God's great chain of history. He reminded Elijah that success would come, that justice would triumph, and that there were still seven thousand in his own small country who had not given up the fight.

God hasn't and won't let the race of men who seek to do his will die out. In every age and land and barracks and bunker and detachment and office and kitchen there are still many working silently and unostentatiously for good.

It may seem that we too often are yesterday's heroes and tomorrow's heels. But in God's own time and in God's own way victory and honor and joy will come so long as we keep on the job and seek to do God's will wherever we are.

SPENCER D. McQUEEN

What Chance Have I?

A QUESTION frequently asked by youth in our time sounds harmless enough. You wouldn't think it was a sin to ask it. Yet it carries the implication of a grave danger. The very simple proposition of keeping ideals and making the most of life prompts some, especially young men in uniform, to come back with the question, "What chance have I?"

The subtle sin of it lies in the complacent acceptance that against such odds, nothing can be done. This can be the greatest block possible to whatever chances there may be.

The question comes from at least two frustrations:

A man asks "What chance have I?" because school is interrupted, and chances hindered for a home and children, by his military career.

Then because, for the time being, his destiny is decided for him, . . . he asks it in regard to his job, his assignment, his advancement and all the factors involved. This life, so much different from the normal pattern, gives him little say-so.

Soon a man gets the feeling that his life is not very significant. And here lies the real danger. His question becomes the plaintive cry of a generation caught in the web of circumstances about which they think nothing can be done.

Jesus could have felt the same way when he came to that last week in his life. The opposition he had aroused, and the events which culminated in the mock trials, left no other course than the Cross. It was the logical outcome of the spirit of his life of service and sacrifice. It was the result of his dedication to a higher will. But when he faced all this, he said: *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say, 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name."*

This is the clue to our answer. If we look at our chances, not from the viewpoint of the odds against us for the fulfillment of

our desires, but from the viewpoint of the opportunities before us, we can overcome the cynicism that is so apt to increase those odds.

I

Suppose we start with the proposition that each of us has a fifty-fifty chance. At least that! When we ask the question "What chance have I?" or, as we are more apt to do, exclaim, "Fat chance I've got!" we are really saying that we have but one chance in a million. And no matter how you look at it, this is a belittling view of life and of ourselves.

Orva Lee Ice, a minister from Minneapolis, puts it squarely:

> One cannot hope to become a tall life of value among men if he is betraying his best self by such thoughts as "I do not have a chance" or "No use for me to try." We consider it a tragedy when a man deliberately takes his life in a moment. It is no less suicide when one throttles his best self by degrees over a long period by slowly murdering his own nobility.

Even the Old Testament cynic Ecclesiastes put it on a fifty-fifty basis: "Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all." He is saying here that trying doesn't help our chances. He is insisting that life is just a matter of luck. And that brands him as cynical. But he is less cynical than the modern who asks our question. "Time and chance happen to them all." Even this bare minimum outlook is better than complete futility. An even chance is better than one in a million.

Too many of us count the fifty chances against us but fail to see the fifty chances that are for us. The psalmist once said, "The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." We would have to admit that. Just think of our privileges and opportunities! Even the benefits accrued from our military career work for us. Consider the provisions made for college opportunities to veterans. Some of us can remember going to college in the depression years, when students were known to live on a diet of cabbage and peanuts, and when they wore linoleum in their shoes because they couldn't afford half soles!

Yet those students never stopped to weigh those hardships against the better chance they would bring.

So if we can agree that, all things being equal, we have a fifty-fifty chance to make something of our life and to find a fulfillment of our fond hopes, it becomes a matter of decision with us. We say, "My soul is troubled!" We can say, "Lord, save me from this hour." Or we can capture the courage with which Jesus faced those trying days of his last week: *"For this purpose I have come to this hour."*

II

It is this sense of purpose that will lead us to our finest opportunities. A "chance of a lifetime" comes only to those who are prepared for it. Once in a while the undeserving do get the breaks, and we exclaim about the injustice of it. But by and large, those who go beavering eagerly about to get their chance through pull or some easy method cannot meet the stern challenge of it should it come. Their big chance is muffed because they have by-passed the discipline of preparation.

Again, it isn't a matter of exceptional ability. It is our aim, not our endowment alone, that makes us eligible for the chance of a lifetime. We need to remember the parable of the talents. The reckoning Lord did not expect a five-talent return from those who had received only two talents, or one talent, in the beginning. But he was angry because the one-talent man hid his in the earth.

John Sutherland Bonnell refers to the parable and says that through it Jesus is teaching us

> that God has planted within each of us a specific endowment that has been granted to nobody else. There is no one to whom God has not entrusted a precious gift. When you say therefore, "I have no ability, I have nothing to offer the world," you are not merely reflecting on yourself—you are reflecting on God! . . . The lack of faith in one's mission in life is the cause of multitudes of failures. When you have learned to believe in God's purpose for you as an individual, you are immediately lifted out of the mass and become significant and meaningful in the eyes of God and of man.

The great battle for the big chance is in keeping our purpose alive. Kahlil Gibran has a little parable in *The Madman* which should make us stop and think in this regard:

A fox looked at his shadow at sunrise
And said, "I will have a camel for lunch today!"
So all morning he went about looking for camels. . . .
But at noon he saw his shadow again,
And he said,
"A mouse will do."

The purpose must be as much a part of us as the precious gifts of native talents God has given—something we wouldn't part with for anything. It should be like the gun Carlyle Marney tells about, which his friend wanted to buy from the veteran craftsman who had made it. This was a marvelous gun, perfect in every detail. When the friend asked, "How much?" the owner cradled the beautiful rifle across his arm, looked down at it, and said: "I made it for my own; nobody could buy it; there isn't anything that could buy it. Perhaps my son will want it." The friend smiled and said, a little wistfully, "Every man ought to have something somewhere that he wouldn't sell for anything." How true that is of our sense of mission!

Remember Shakespeare's famous lines from *Julius Caesar*?

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

The same tragic consequence follows if the chance of a lifetime is missed, not because of lack of native ability, but merely from lack of a sense of mission. "Lord, save me from this hour"? No—*"For this purpose I have come to this hour."*

III

"What chance have I?" We have seen that we do have a chance—at least a halfway chance—and that a sense of mission can make us ready for our big chance when it comes. But the answer of religion is more wonderful still. God promises a *second* chance, after we have failed.

Back in the days of Moses the tribes of Israel were receiving their portions of the Promised Land, and the great leader was giving his blessings to them. When he came to Asher, Moses added something which proved to be a far greater blessing than the

fertile territory assigned to this tribe. Here are his words: "Blessed above sons be Asher; let him be the favorite of his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil. Your bars shall be iron and bronze; and *as your days, so shall your strength be.*"

It was a promise that has led many to know that each new day is another chance and that, if we have the purpose of God's will for our lives, he will supply the strength to meet each new challenge.

But here is another reason why our cynical question is a subtle sin. Not only is it hopeless, but it centers attention on ourselves. It asks, "What can I get out of life?"

Even the disciples succumbed to self-seeking. They are represented as coming to Jesus on one occasion saying, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?" As if to say, "What's in it for us?"

The Master recognized this human trait and on many occasions promised a reward. But when you come to the spirit of his own life, you find little concern about the outcome. He breathed into life a higher concern than fear of punishment or hope of reward.

After making his decision not to ask to be saved from his critical hour because for this purpose he had come to that hour, he turned attention away from himself as he asked, "Father, glorify thy name." This petition expressed the whole spirit of his life. It led on to the garden where he prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done," and on to the cross, where he said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" He lived in the promise that strength would be supplied and in the confidence that came with acceptance of his responsibility.

The answer to our question "What chance have I?" may be found in Romans 8:28. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible gives a new insight into the famous words of Paul, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The new version reads: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him." Roy L. Smith says it means that "God is doing his best, and if we will do our best, then the best will be the outcome."

What better chance could we want?

FRANCIS LEE ALBERT

Making the Most of What You Have

NAVY men always like "Popeye the Sailor Man." We like Popeye because he is upright and downright and outright; because he does the best he can with what he has; because he doesn't offer lengthy explanations or excuses or alibis. And his phrase that we like best is, "I yam what I yam."

When I was a small lad at home, we had a big black-bound picture book; and the picture in that book that I remember best showed a little brown bear away up in the top of a tall nut tree, looking as if he were afraid to do anything about it. And standing on the ground under the tree were the plump old mama bear and the big old papa bear, saying in gruff tones:

> Quit your *if*'s and *and*'s and *but*'s,
> And let us see you shake down nuts.

In other words, we pay for results, not explanations.

With that as a front porch, we are ready to enter into the house of our sermon, the theme of which is "Making the Most of What You Have," based on the Navy principle: Do the best you can with what you have, where you are, now. And I wish to use as illustrations three scriptural characters who accomplished great things for God and their fellow men by using the things that they had right where they were.

Moses Was the Meekest Man in the World

(*Exod. 3-4*)

There isn't a sailor in the audience this morning who ever had a humbler job than Moses had when the story opens in Exodus 3. Moses was keeping sheep—and there isn't a dumber domestic animal than a sheep. They weren't his sheep; they belonged to his father-in-law, Jethro. And they weren't a prize flock on exhibition either. They were just an ordinary flock of sheep away out on the

Midian Desert beyond Mount Horeb. But Moses' interest was aroused: God spoke to him. And when God found Moses alert and his mind attentive and receptive, he said: "Come deliver Israel."

Moses was modest and meek. He said, in effect: "Who am I? I am not eloquent. I have had no training. I have no equipment. I am of slow speech and have a slow tongue."

But God said, "What is that in thine hand?"

Now Moses had a rod, a shepherd's crook, a crooked stick cut from a crab-apple thicket. It was nothing in itself. He could have thrown it away and cut himself a better one any day. But when Moses stepped out in faith on God's promises, that shepherd's crook became the rod of God, the symbol of God's presence and power, with which Moses saved Israel.

By being attentive to God's voice and obedient to God's will, Moses changed from the meekest of men to the mightiest man in Old Testament history, and many historians and scholars regard him as one of the ten greatest men of all time.

The lesson is simple: Use what is at hand. That is the method by which all worth-while things are accomplished. God uses the little to accomplish the greater.

What Is That in Thine Hand, Shamgar?

(*Judges 3:31*)

Only an oxgoad, used to urge lazy beasts—a short stick that Shamgar might have discarded any day for a better one. But with it he slew 600 Philistines, the enemies of the children of Israel. And although Shamgar is mentioned only once again—"In the days of Shamgar" (Judges 5:6*a*)—his name became immortal because he obeyed God and did the best he could with what he had.

If Shamgar had refused to use the oxgoad because it was crude, or small, or ill-suited to the task, no such honor of victory would have been his, and he would have been just another ox-driver.

People are losing the joy of service and the honor of better victories every day because they do not do their best for God and their fellow men with the things they have. Here is the point: God

judges us, not by what we have, nor even by what we do, but by *what we do with what we have.*

What Is That in Thine Hand, David?

(*1 Sam. 17*)

David, the eighth and youngest son of Jesse, kept his father's sheep. He had a homemade slingshot, a little weapon that he used for his pleasure and protection and with which he had gained proficiency.

David's three oldest brothers were with the armies of Saul, called together to fight against the Philistines. The two armies were encamped on opposite hills, with a valley between them. And every day the champion of the Philistines, Goliath the giant of Gath, who was nine and one-half feet tall, a real hunk of man, who had a helmet of brass and a coat of mail and shin guards of brass and a breastplate of brass, and the staff of whose spear was like a beam, cried his challenge across the valley:

> Choose you a man . . . , and let him come down to me. If he . . . kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, . . . then shall ye be our servants. . . . Give me a man, that we may fight together.

And when Saul and his soldiers heard that stentorian voice with its booming challenge, they shivered and shook clear down into their sandals.

Jesse thought a great deal about his three older boys away in the army, just as your parents think many times of you who are away from home in the Navy. So he said to his youngest son something like this: "You leave the sheep and go up and see how your brothers are getting along."

Did your mother ever dry sweet corn when the roasting ears were just right? Not bad! Well, the old man said to David: "You take a bag of parched corn up to the boys, and ten loaves of your mother's homemade bread, and take along ten of these milk cheeses for the captain." The old man was a politician!

Now David was a fair-haired, pink-cheeked lad of sixteen or seventeen; and when he got up to the camp, he looked around, just as your kid brother would want to do if he came to visit you here. And David heard Goliath defying Israel; and he couldn't

understand how an uncivilized Philistine could defy the armies of the living God.

But Eliab, his eldest brother, was angry. He'd been in the army several weeks. He'd passed through boot camp; he knew what it was all about. So he said: "Beat it, kid; shove off; go on back to those sheep in the wilderness."

And David, with the aggravating impudence that is natural to a kid brother and with the amazing audacity of youth, said innocently, "What have I done now?"

Then some of the soldiers took David to Saul, to whom he said: "Let no man's heart fail . . . ; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

And Saul equipped David with his armor, his helmet and his coat of mail, and gave him his sword. But David said to Saul: "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them."

So David took his own slingshot, and, as he crossed the brook at the bottom of the hill, he chose five smooth pebbles. When Goliath saw David, he disdained him and said, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

But David said:

> Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; . . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel . . . : for the battle is the Lord's.

And David ran forward and, putting his hand into his shepherd's bag, took out a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead so that he fell upon his face to the earth.

Conclusion

Some of us have capacities we have never thought of using for the good of our fellow men or for the glory of God. . . . Can you sing? Play? Draw? Tell a Story? . . . Use your skill, your power, your present proficiency, in the name of the Lord of hosts, and he will multiply its effectiveness.

What is that in thine hand? It may be a squilgee, a deck swab, or a broom. It may be a garden hoe, or a yard rake, or a wrench. It may be a tennis racquet, or a golf club, or a baseball bat. It

may be a pen, or a pencil, or a typewriter. It may be a gun, or a book, or a writing pad. Whatever it is, it can hardly be more insignificant that Moses' shepherd's crook, or Shamgar's oxgoad, or David's sling.

But the lesson is the same in every case: *God wants us to serve him and his now, just where we are, with the things we have.*

All these men accomplished great things by using their present little facilities. . . . So may you, and *you,* and YOU.

What is that in thine hand?

GEORGE S. WILSON

Lost Boundaries

IN the twentieth chapter of First Kings we have the record of one of the most intriguing battles in all military annals.

Benhadad, the king of Syria, had done a tremendous job of logistics. He had got together the armies of thirty-two kings, with all the matériel for making war on Israel. When everything was ready, he sent an ultimatum to Ahab, king of Israel, that Ahab should send over all his gold, silver, children, and pretty wives.

Israel was sitting there without any defense, and so Ahab agreed.

With success, Benhadad then said he would send his staff over the next day and have them go through Ahab's houses and take what they wanted. What Ahab had there that was worth while besides gold, silver, children, and pretty wives we don't know; but anyway he balked at this proposal and called a conference of his staff.

His staff advised Ahab to reply in the negative to this request.

As soon as the Syrians got their answer, they started to march.

Just as Benhadad's armies surrounded the city and seemed assured of success, the prophet of God came to Ahab in Israel's headquarters and told him that God would destroy the Syrians.

So Ahab mustered his forces and discovered he had 232 soldiers besides 7,000 other people. At noon the 232 attacked.

The Syrian scouts brought word of the attack to Benhadad, who was in the club drinking with his staff, and he was not alarmed but told his men to capture the Israelites.

The battle proved to be a rout, with Israel overwhelmingly victorious; but Benhadad himself escaped.

Not one to take a thing lying down, Benhadad called in his intelligence officers and asked what happened. As they searched for a reply they finally hit upon an answer that seemed plausible to them: "Their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger

than we; but let us fight against them in the plains, and surely we shall be stronger than they."

Well, that sounded reasonable; so with the arrival of spring Benhadad "shook up the troops." He removed the kings and replaced them with military men and started the attack.

Once more the prophet came to Ahab and said: *"Thus says the Lord, 'Because the Syrians have said, "The Lord is a god of the hills but he is not a god of the valleys," therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.'"*

So the battle was fought with a small group of Israelites against all the host of Syria. And when it was all over, 127,000 Syrians were dead, and Benhadad was begging for mercy.

Now it is an interesting story in itself, for probably never have so few battled so great a force and been victorious. But the point I want to bring out is the reason given by the prophet for the defeat of Syria. It was this: they thought that God was God of the hills and not of the valleys.

That seems silly to us today. That anyone should believe boundaries could be set up around God, so that men could say he was in the hills but not in the valleys—this seems ridiculous. And yet, although we smile at the reasoning of the Syrians, we unconsciously do the same thing ourselves. We set up boundaries for God which are false and need to be destroyed.

I

In the first place, we are very much like the Syrians in feeling that God is in one place and not in another. Unconsciously we may feel that God is back in the hills of Pennsylvania or Kentucky but not here in the plains or valleys of Maryland. We feel that God was back there where we went to Sunday school, church, or Communion, and he was very real; but he isn't here at the naval hospital or corps school in Bainbridge. Oh, I know we don't do it consciously. If I were to ask any of you if you felt that way, you would say no. But we do so just the same.

I believe this is shown in two ways:

1. First, we say: "I'm away from home now, and the rules no longer apply." Or we may think: We're sailors now, and we're big

wheels (they even put our pictures in the home-town paper), and so we can do what we want to do.

But one day we'll realize that God is as much here as there, and the Christian rules apply even if we go to the ends of the earth. We have it on high authority that whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

In James Thurber's *Fables for Our Time* there is one story which seems particularly to the point here. It is the story of a bird who flew through a field in which some carpenters had left a pane of glass. The bird flew into the glass and was knocked cold. When it finally woke up, it went back to where the other birds were and said it had run into some solidified air.

The other birds laughed at this, but finally they decided they would fly through the field and see for themselves. They wanted one of the smaller birds to come with them, but he thought he would just wait and see. They kept trying to get him to go, but he refused. So they said they would try it without him. (I guess they thought the little bird was a queer duck, or even a little chicken.) They all flew through the field, with the exception of the one little bird, and they were all knocked cold.

The moral of the story, according to Mr. Thurber, is, "He who hesitates is sometimes saved."

The next time someone says to you, "Aw, we're sailors, and those rules don't apply here; I've been to Baltimore before, and I know some good bars and have some good addresses"—well, remember then that you must live with yourself a long time, and "he who hesitates is sometimes saved."

2. This irrational feeling that God can be left behind has a second consequence—loneliness. We feel that God was very near and dear to us at our church back home, but now he has deserted us.

This is the feeling of the "mate" in Joaquin Miller's poem about the voyage of Christopher Columbus. They had sailed off all the maps that had ever been made, and knew they would soon drop off the edge of the flat earth:

> They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
> Until at last the blanched mate said:
> "Why, now not even God would know
> Should I and all my men fall dead.

These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone."

For them, God was very real back in Portugal or Spain, but God had never got out there—and they felt a dreadful aloneness.

When we feel this way we need to remember God's unfailing providence. He "whose eye is on the sparrow" watches out for us here as much as anywhere else. And the One who said, "Lo, I am with you . . . , even unto the end," will never leave nor forsake us.

II

Another false boundary we have made is that between our religion and our living. We are often content to let Christ rule in our lives if he will keep his proper place as we see it. We like Christianity very much—but let it remain in the chapel! We have unconsciously or through our actions said, "Let religion remain in the chapel. God is God there but not out on the drill field, or in the barracks, or in the chow line."

This is something that is always rather amusing. If we are going in or out of chapel, we are very courteous and polite; we step aside to let someone go ahead. We give a fellow worshiper our hymnal and find another. But let us get in the chow line and nobody is going to push in ahead of us—we know our rights! Are we not saying that God is God of the line going in and out of the chapel but not of the line going in and out of the mess hall?

The false boundary between religion and life is the subject of a little verse that appeared in the Catholic magazine *Integrity:*

Mr. Business went to Mass,
He never missed a Sunday.
Mr. Business went to hell
For what he did on Monday.

We have the word of our Lord in the seventh chapter of Matthew: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." We cannot do his will unless we try to do it every day, in classroom, barracks, ward, and drill hall. For surely God is God of the whole of life, and not only of the chapel at "eleven hundred" Sunday morning when the church pennant flies.

III

A third false boundary is one that is drawn between one group of people and another, as though God were not the Father of the whole human family.

The other day, up in my office in the corps school, I found a note on my desk. It was unsigned, and we all have a tendency to throw anonymous letters into the wastebasket; but this one had truth in it. I read: "Chaplain, there is a field that I think you have neglected in your character-guidance lectures. That is the field of race prejudice. Some of us in the school have been given a hard time by our classmates because of their prejudice against our race." The handwriting could tell me little about my correspondent—neither his color nor his religion. But clearly he belonged to a minority group.

The thought that worries me is this: If such a condition exists, why are we here? Why talk of defending freedom and democracy in the world if we don't practice it at home? The man who wrote this letter will some day soon be a corpsman. He may then go to the Fleet Marine Force. If some day on some battlefield you are lying wounded and yell "Corpsman!" are you going to ask, when he crawls through that hell to help you, if he is a Jew, or if he is a Negro? You bet your life you are not! You and I are going to thank God that he had the courage to come out there and save our lives.

No, this is a false boundary. "God . . . made of one blood all nations of men." The blood of the fellow you sneer at or tell jokes about runs red just as yours, and he is as willing to shed it as you and I are that your children and mine may live in a nation that is free.

Unconsciously, we have resembled the Syrian in supposing God was in one place and not another. . . . We have built our foolish barriers. . . . But if we do his will, we must destroy them. They must all become *lost* boundaries!

CHARLES WALTON ACKLEY

What Makes a Good Fight?

ONE summer the Naval Air Station, Agana, Guam, where I was based, played host to the All-Navy Boxing Championship Finals for the Western Pacific. The event, which lasted several nights, excited a great deal of interest. A trip to Hawaii and even the States for further eliminations was only part of the possible reward. One fighter, I understand, made the Olympics. Night after night I watched those fellows slug it out for the chance of a lifetime. Defeat could be devastating and bitter; victory was glorious and decisive.

I thought then of another fighter—no longer youthful in body, but triumphant in spirit—who was able to say when the contest was over, "I have fought a *good* fight." The Apostle Paul was a many-sided individual. Too often we forget his intriguing interest in athletics. Perhaps he was denied active participation in sports during his own youth; perhaps he indulged in them more than we suppose. At least he had a fan's vocabulary. His letters abound in references to various sports which must have been gleaned from actual participation in, or attendance upon, the contests of his time.

There were at least four great sports contests held regularly in Paul's day: the Pythian games at Delphi; the Nemean at Argos; the Isthmian near Corinth; and the Olympic games, the greatest of all, which have been revived in our own times. These Greek games or contests included foot, horse, and chariot racing; spear and discus throwing; wrestling and boxing. Usually only a simple crown of laurel leaves was awarded the winner; but it was priceless, for it carried with it lifelong honor.

Paul, now in a Roman prison, on trial for his life, writes to a young friend, a recruit in the contest of life, urging him to take up where he may have to leave off. He closes the letter in triumph, saying that, whatever the outcome of this particular trial, he has "fought a good fight."

What made the Apostle's contest with life proud and good? What makes a *good* fight? I want to suggest one reason for Paul's happy victory—one obvious but very important element if we would make our contest with life likewise proud and good. This element indispensable to victory is the discipline of training.

I

One Sunday morning during the WesPac finals at Agana, while crossing the air strip on my way to the chapel, I met one of the boxers jogging along, making about as good time as my beat-up jeep. It was comparatively early for a Sunday morning—about 0800. But there he was, stripped down to athletic shorts, training alone while his buddies slept. I couldn't help thinking of the sheepish looks I would meet later from fellows who had sacrificed church for "good ole sack time." And here was a lad subjecting his body to rigid rules, to a discipline, in order to make a good fight that night.

Paul was well aware of this hidden cost back of every worthwhile endeavor. "Every man in training," he says, much as your high-school coach has said it, "is temperate [that it, moderate] in all things." "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage."

"Bondage"—that word doubtless has meaning for many of you. The bondage of home, perhaps, from which you have escaped only to find the bondage of the Navy! The bondage of school—and you find school at the Training Center and hear it rumored that there are even training classes aboard ship!

And then there is the bondage of Christ. Often Paul speaks of the *freedom* of the good life, the Christ life; but here he emphasizes its bondage. Take my boxer: in winning that night *none was so free as he;* but on the strip that morning *I saw that freedom being earned, by bondage to rules.* "If anyone takes part in an athletic contest," says Paul again, "he gets no prize unless he obeys the rules."

Life is like that. An old professor friend of mine once said, "The only freedom we have is the freedom to choose our own bondage." And through that bondage we may train to win the fight of life.

Paul was not always a Christian; he was not always triumphant. Far from it! There was a time when he hated the ground Chris-

tians walked on, when he had a bitter philosophy of life and literally took it out on others. But Paul was honest, and, seeing the light on the Damascus Road, he thought and fought his way through to a self-mastery—or, rather, Christ mastery—which has been a saga of courage and a benediction to all humanity.

II

Paul is specific. He suggests three rules for life's training:

1. "*Curb the cravings of youth,*" he says. Note that he does not say "destroy" or "repress," but "curb"—that is, put a bit on them.

Many of us have had the good fortune to live on farms, and we love horses. Some of you may have broken and trained them. Now no one wants a broken-spirited horse, nor one that knows no master. Rather, we desire one, high-spirited, and *instantly obedient* to the slightest flick of the reins, whose powerful energies are directed into proper and useful channels.

So with my boxer. He had *curbed* his natural, normal desires for "sack time," for movies and dates; and I dare say he was the better for it in every way. He was more alert; his eyes sparkled; he had more spirit; he was getting more real fun out of life than his sluggish, half-hearted buddies who yielded to every personal whim and social pressure.

The drives for pleasure, for freedom, for power, are common to us all: it is how they are managed that tells the tale. Inordinate, uncontrolled desires are "lusts," which Paul advises us to "flee," or "shun"—or, as we have it in Weymouth's translation, to "curb" or harness for good.

2. Again, Paul says: "Cling to the things which you have learnt and of which you are convinced, knowing . . . that . . . the sacred writings . . . are able to make you wise to obtain salvation." *Cling to the things which you have learned.*

Have you ever wondered just how old the science of boxing is? In one of his "Believe it or not" columns Ripley claims that an ancient Greek is the greatest boxer of all time. A thousand knockouts are credited to him! And those were the bare-knuckle days! Boxing has been prettied up since then, given some dignity, the rules made specific; but I dare say that the fundamentals have changed little or none since the beginning. Most disciplines are

like that, despite our penchant for the modern, which we so commonly conceive as radical change.

The battle of life is like that too. A young French soldier named Descartes, dissatisfied with the thinking of his day, decided to do his own and thereby instituted changes which have profoundly affected the whole of Western society and earned for him the title of "father of modern civilization." Yet in his famous little book called *Discourse on Method,* in which he explains how he hopes to find the truth, he suggests that if you are dissatified with your house, you will be wise to look for or build another; but you will not turn your wife and children out upon the street to starve, perhaps, and go naked, while you are building a better home. The old house may be dark and drafty, the floors may creak and the beams sag; but it is better than nothing at all.

So Descartes, quite sure that the ideas of his folks and the principles of his church left much to be desired, yet "clung to the things which he had learnt," to the best things he knew, until he had built for himself something better. Such an attitude toward life is equally important to us.

You men come from everywhere, and your training, in some ways, has been as different, each from the other, as the names of the places from which you hale. For some of you the Navy means new and difficult restrictions; for others (after you get out of recruit training, at least!) this experience promises a new exercise of freedom—from conservative parents, from Sunday-school teachers, perhaps from the gossipy tongues of the neighborhood. But for all of us, coming into the Navy is something of a shock, necessitating the rethinking of traditional, familiar patterns of thought and conduct perhaps unquestioned until now. I cannot, then, urge you too strongly to "cling" to the truths you already know, to the convictions which are yours, to the highest standards of thought and conduct you have learned—*cling* to your house of faith, however small and unsatisfactory it may seem at the moment. Cling to this shelter while you build a larger and better one.

Above all, keep this "rule book," this "Discourse on Method" which is the Bible—keep it handy. For it tells you how to build, how to fight. As Paul says, it will "make you wise to obtain salvation."

3. The third rule is this: *"Accept your share of suffering."*

I read the other night of a young Negro boxer who has a dramatic story back of his championship. After struggling along in the United States awhile, he went to South America, where he won something like 158 out of 165 tries, largely by knockouts. Think of the beatings that guy took! But it was the only way: armchair strategy may be good preparation of sorts, but in the end you must put on the mits and get in there and fight. And win, lose, or draw, you're going to get hurt—some. The object is, of course, to get hurt less than your opponent! But you will get hurt. That's part of the toughening, hardening process which enables you to continue to climb, to fight, to conquer.

Life is like that. Paul phrased it as if from experience when he wrote: "Thou therefore *endure hardness,* as a good soldier [or sailor] of Jesus Christ," or, as Weymouth puts it, "Accept your share of suffering."

All of life is a sharing: whether joy or sorrow comes our way, there are others in the same boat with us. We may think at times: "Laugh, and the world laughs with you; weep, and you weep alone." But it's not true. Kahlil Gibran, the Syrian poet, came much closer to the truth when he said: "You can forget those with whom you have laughed, but you can never forget those with whom you have wept." For if you can "take it" as well as "give it" in the contest of life, you will make discoveries impossible to make in any other way: the loyalty of those who count, and the goodness of God.

Paul, lonely in his cell, mourns that Demas has "forsaken" him, "having loved this present world"; but in the same breath he rejoices that he has found another, who more than takes the place of Demas. And more important still, after the first trial before Nero, in Timothy's absence, Paul can say: "At my first defense no one took my part. . . . But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength. . . . So I was rescued from the lion's mouth!"

III

On our station at Agana there was a likable lad, a violinist, who used to play occasionally in the chapel services. He was also something of a boxer. He had the build for boxing; he possessed a measure of talent; and he had availed himself of some training.

He used to come around to the library or to the chapel and talk long of his ambitions. His aunt was going to send him to music school as soon as he got out of the Navy; and he was always going to "take" a boxing championship. He got quite excited about the WesPac finals—about two weeks before those eliminations were held! And even then he found it hard not to "ease by" in his training. You may, of course, visualize the result.

Paul didn't try to ease by. He paid full fare and hence received his full reward.

It is said that a man's last words often reveal his true character. The last words we have from Paul are a ringing shout of victory: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

And then he adds for us, lest we think him to be an exception: "And not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

RUPERT L. McCANON

"The Master Is Come, and Calleth for Thee"

SOMETIMES a text from the Bible seems to speak directly to each of us. "*The Master is come, and calleth for thee*"—here is such a text. The words were spoken by Martha to her sister, Mary. But many others were interested and implicated, even as we are.

Recently I saw a small boy whose mother was calling from his home several doors away. I heard her, and he heard her; but he was being very still so that *she* would not hear *him*. His experience was that in a few minutes she would give up and stop calling. Then he could go on with his play as though nothing had happened.

Some people try to do that when God calls. Jonah tried it. He ran away from his assignment but found himself shortly at Nineveh, right where God had told him to go. Joshua called the children of Israel together and said to them, "Choose this day whom you will serve." When the Master calls, he cannot be evaded or put off: we have to choose whether we shall follow.

The disciples heard his call. They made a good start, every one of them. He called them to follow, and they left their several occupations and went with him.

Peter and Andrew, James and John, were partners in a fishing business on the Sea of Galilee. They got acquainted with Jesus. The Master proposed that they leave their boats and nets and come with him to be, as he said, "fishers of men." And they did it!

He got acquainted with Matthew at the tax office. I don't know how Jesus happened to stop there—but we wonder how he gets into lots of places and into the lives of many people. Matthew collected money for the government. Jesus may have talked with him about collecting lives for God—something like the earlier

suggestion about changing the type of fishing. At any rate, he said to Matthew, "Follow me," and Matthew followed.

As to the manner in which he called the others of the Twelve, we know little. They all had their ways of life. They all had things to do. They all could have found plausible excuses, probably even reasons, for not following him. Sometimes he gave scant encouragement. To one man who wanted to follow him he said: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." But to all, then as now, he extends an invitation, he gives a call.

The disciples had joined Jesus along the way; and now, miles from Jerusalem, safe on the east side of the Jordan River, they were glad that he had led them, for once at least, out of danger's way. Then came the word about Lazarus, and he called them again: "Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Going to Lazarus meant more than just crossing the Jordan and climbing the Jericho Road to the village of Bethany. It meant danger and probable death. Bethany lay on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and there, a few days earlier, the national leaders had tried to stone Jesus.

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Jesus looked around the circle, waiting while they argued about it.

"It's too dangerous," they said.

"It's useless."

But still he said, "Let us go to him."

Well, come on, disciples, don't just stand there! Are you going, or are you not? It wasn't a command, you know. Jesus doesn't command anybody. He just tells people what they ought to do, what is right to do.

I once heard a drill sergeant say to a squad of rookies, "I can't make you do any of this stuff, but I can make you *wish you had!*" Well, Jesus isn't even like that; and yet in a way he is. For although he does not threaten, still we know that unless we answer his call and do his will, we shall never feel right about it. We shall always, somehow, wish that we had.

They were great men, these disciples. Jesus calls you and me and all of us. But to the tasks of apostleship he called only twelve, and these clearly reflected his own love—all but Judas. Many

suffered martyrdom for him. "Let us also go," said Thomas, "that we may die with him." And they went.

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee." It was Martha who said it, but what about herself? How did she answer the call?

On one occasion when Jesus was in their home, Martha had complained that Mary, her sister, ought to help her with the supper instead of spending all of the time talking with him. Jesus had told her that Mary had chosen the better part and that it should not be taken away from her. But he did not overlook the fact that somebody had to get the supper; somebody had to do the housework, the cleaning and dusting and all the myriad little chores about the home. Not everyone can be the master builder. Someone must always carry the burdens. If bricks are made, someone must dig the mud; and if they are built into a wall, someone must carry them to it.

A great scientist was hailed the world over as one of the greatest of men. But it was his wife who remembered to put his toothbrush into his suitcase and insisted that he wear his rubbers in bad weather. Martha was like that wife.

When Lazarus became ill, the sisters sent word to Jesus and asked him to come. But when they heard that he was near, it was Martha who went out to meet him and to make any arrangements that he might want made.

They both said when they saw him, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." But it was Martha who added, "And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

Martha was practical; she was one of those whom the psalmist had in mind when he said, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

"Here is the Master, asking for you" (Goodspeed). Martha said it to Mary, who was weeping in her room alone. She arose quickly and followed Martha to Jesus. She, too, lamented that he had not been present at the first. But she offered no further suggestion; she just cried her heart out. And Jesus, touched to the depths of his spirit, wept with her.

There is a place for tears that is far more important than we sometimes realize. When Jesus was betrayed by Judas and then denied by Peter, Judas went back to the chief priests and argued

with them, trying to undo his wrong. Peter didn't argue; he didn't do anything "practical." He went out and wept bitterly. Who knows whether hot tears of repentance might not have washed the soul of Judas and cleansed even the heart of the betrayer so that the forgiving Lord might have restored him to his fellowship? I don't know. Do you?

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee." There was quite a crowd at the home of the sisters when Jesus returned. They were touched by Jesus' grief as he wept with Mary. "See how he loved him!" they said. There wasn't much that the crowd could do in that situation except sympathize, and crowds are quick to do that. They may be careless and callous about suffering when it is a long way off; but when brought face to face with it, people go "all out" to help. We hear it on the radio; we see it in the news every day.

Multitudes followed him in that day to hear his voice, and multitudes respond to his call today. When a great congregation is singing and praising God, worshiping him in spirit and in truth, you feel that no other experience has such power to lift our hearts and minds and give them broad horizons.

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee." There was one other to whom Jesus called that day. The twelve disciples, Martha and Mary, and the curious crowd; and then one other, the one for whom the return had been made, the one for whom they all wept, Lazarus.

Lazarus was dead. He had been in the tomb four days. No call could ever reach his ears. Some of the people said that if Jesus, who had opened the eyes of the blind, had been present, he might have kept Lazarus from dying. Yet when Jesus asked that the stone be taken away from the tomb, Martha was shocked. "By this time there will be an odor," she said. But he insisted, and so they moved the stone.

When we pray, we are likely to call upon God first to hear our prayer and then to bring to pass that for which we pray. Jesus didn't do that at all. He began by being thankful. "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," he prayed. The idea is that when we pray, believing, and within the will of God, it is then already an accomplished fact and it is time to be thankful.

So when he called to Lazarus to come forth out of the tomb,

there was only one thing that could happen. Lazarus "came forth."

This was not the only time that Jesus brought life. It happens daily. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "You he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked." Jesus had just said to Martha: "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Well, how about it? Do you believe it? The disciples came at the Master's call; Martha and Mary came; the crowd that stood by came; Jesus called and Lazarus came, and the power of death was broken. His call is as clear today as it was in the long ago. He calls us from smallness to greatness, from darkness to light, from death to life eternal.

Come as you are into the light of his love and hear him say, as Lazarus heard, "Loose him, and let him go."

The Master is here and is calling for YOU.

APPENDIX

The following address speaks, not to members of the armed forces, but to young people whose military service lies ahead of them. Delivered to the students of Bucknell University by the Chief of Air Force Chaplains, it is, essentially, the challenge of every chaplain to the youth of this generation, pleading with them to rise to their world-wide responsibilities.

Not only does it speak for *chaplains; it speaks* to *them as well. For the occasion—the conferring upon Chaplain Carpenter of an honorary degree—betokens the growing respect accorded the chaplain's vital ministry.*

Sedatives or Solutions

IN Genesis we find the story of a fearful catastrophe that brought with it a great opportunity. It was the kind of situation we face today in the aftermath of war. But I would call your attention to the outcome of the story, for here the modern parallels are startling.

God, we read, was about to vent his wrath upon the world. He directed Noah to prepare an "ark" and to take into it two specimens of every living creature, as well as the members of Noah's own family.

Noah built the ark.

Then God sent rains upon the earth. For forty days and forty nights the rains descended, until "every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, . . . and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

Finally the rains ceased; the floods went down; and Noah, his family, and all the animals in the ark came out upon dry land. God then made a covenant with Noah never again to destroy all flesh by the waters of a flood, and as a sign of that covenant he placed a rainbow in the sky.

Through this experience Noah was given the chance to build

a new world. Everything had been destroyed. All was to be made new. Here was man faced with a great opportunity and, as always, a comparable responsibility. Everything was to be made new through the use of imagination, ingenuity, and industry. Noah was to create a new world. What did Noah do?

It is stated in the Scripture: "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: *and he drank of the wine, and was drunken*" (Gen. 9:20-21, A.V.). Here we have an example of an individual who failed in his responsibility and missed his great opportunity.

This is a disgusting picture; yet it is not an unusual one. Time and again the most fortunate people, possessed of a chance to change the world, have wasted their lives in confusion, frustration, and failure. Of this group here today, some of you, having the chance to solve the problems of a new era, may instead become part of those problems.

What will you have: sedatives for yourselves, or solutions for the world? The answer will depend largely on your view of the meaning of life. Does life mean to you, "Get what you want; satisfy your own needs; gain position, power, wealth; learn to win friends and influence people"? To be successful, must you hold firmly to an egocentric position, or will you have a vision of the vastness of the world and dare to use your knowledge to find a solution for the problems of the world? Will your life be centered in the accomplishment of your own private interests, or will you recognize the challenge of the needs of others?

A friend of mine tells a story of his little boy. The child playing in the back yard of his house was a "big shot." He talked to his father about "*my* flower bed," "*my* sandpile," "*my* tricycle," "*my* yard." One day the father took the boy to see the circus, and, as the two walked amid the strange new wonders of the circus world, the youngster, looking at all that was about him, reached up and said, "Daddy, hold my hand." Basically, all of us are like the little child, our lives centered on ourselves. The tragedy is that so many of us never leave our own back yards.

One of the great forces in the modern world is communism. What is it about communism that intrigues so many of the peoples of the world? Bishop Gerald Kennedy gives us a clue as he tells the story of a Russian soldier and an American soldier

in Berlin at the close of the war. The clue is found in the statement of the Red soldier: "We are happy, not because we are rich, but because we know where we are going." Communism gives its adherents a sense of direction. No tired philosophy fighting a holding campaign can cope with this dynamic faith. We can meet its challenge only by daring, under God, to create a better world.

Your view of the meaning of life includes your way of looking at religion. Halford Luccock writes: "Much of the message of the church of today is in the realm of peace, poise, and power in perpetual possession." If this is so, then religion becomes only a search for "peace of mind" or "control of fear." Religion itself becomes a sedative. This was never the dynamic message of the Christ. This was not his own view of religion.

You remember the occasion when a rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" In modern terminology, the young man was seeking a sedative. Listen to Jesus' reply: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, . . . and come, follow me." The emphasis was on action: "Go," "Sell," "Give," "Come," "Follow." The ruler's thought was, "What can I get out of life?" Jesus was concerned that he should give something to life.

Many people think that since the young man had kept all the ground rules of the religion of his day, and obeyed all the laws, he had a right to expect compensation comparable to his conduct. Actually, compensation was not to be given on the basis of his conduct but on the basis of his contribution. In other words, "It's not enough to be good; you have to be *good for something.*" Twenty centuries of Christianity are not the result of tranquillity and evasion but rather the result of the courage and vision of men who accepted the challenge of the Cross.

Life magazine has called our time "The Silent Age." If people today are afraid to express their convictions, then this generation is indeed in great danger—a danger greater than that from the hydrogen bomb or any future form of nuclear fission. Solutions today will be found by individuals of deep, serious convictions motivated to dynamic action. They must *live* their faith, whether it be political or religious.

It has often been said that this is a young person's world. The

statement is trite, but it is certainly true. I have an opportunity to observe young Americans at their military duties throughout the world. They are in Japan, Germany, France, England, North Africa, the Philippines, Korea, and elsewhere. Many are living in the midst of customs that are degrading. Daily they face temptations and make decisions between right and wrong. These decisions affect their own lives, but, in addition, they impress the minds of the citizens of countries in which the American armed forces are living.

Yesterday this country of ours was represented before the countries of the world by three groups: the diplomat, the Christian missionary, and the tourist. The diplomat, trained by the Department of State, represented America at the seats of foreign governments. The Christian missionary, true to his divine calling, went into far-distant lands to preach the gospel. The American tourist, blessed with much money, wandered the travelways into many strange places.

Today a fourth group has been added, and that fourth group is by far outnumbering all the others. We find young people in the uniform of this nation representing America in some forty countries of the world.

At the conclusion of World War II we missed our greatest opportunity to convince the world of the reality of the democracy and Christianity of America. We missed the great chance by allowing some of our number to prey upon the civilians of the conquered countries. In Germany, many priceless possessions were bought, or requisitioned, for a few packs of cigarettes or pounds of coffee. In Japan, especially, the moral failure has been costly, and the cause of much bitterness, when unprincipled Americans have "shacked up" and lived among the people. To be sure, this is not the whole story. Other Americans have won respect by fair and generous dealing. Nevertheless, we lost a great opportunity. Like Noah's, ours was to be a new day; and, like Noah, "We drank of the wine and were drunk."

Some of you here may have accepted the false idea that "years of military service are wasted years." You resent the interruption of your plans for life. You would much rather be about the business of developing a career. And I surely can appreciate this attitude. Yet I submit that the only wasted years are the years *you*

waste. Military service, like any responsible position in life today, is important in its every aspect. Success will not be found at the time you develop a career in law or medicine or science. Success will depend on doing your best at whatever task is yours, contributing to life all the idealism and creative ability that have been entrusted to your stewardship.

Now is the time to make your contribution to the building of a better world. As in the Battle of Britain our allies fought against great odds to stand off the vast military resources of Hitler, so you must fight against the breakdown of moral standards in America. This fight is an individual contest. Your contribution to victory—success, if you will—is made as you maintain a personal life representative of the religious tradition of the nation.

I challenge you to this all-important task. If you can meet the challenge, I am sure there will be written, as a final summation of your life, a better epitaph than was written of Noah—Noah, the man who failed to meet the responsibilities of his day; Noah, the man who found a sedative rather than a solution. For of him it was finally written, in the conclusion of the chapter from which our text is taken: "And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: *and he died.*"

CHARLES I. CARPENTER
Chief of Chaplains, United States Air Force

THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON CHAPLAINS AND ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

MEMBER CHURCHES

Advent Christian Church
African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
American Baptist Convention
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
Baptist General Conference of America
Christian Reformed Church
Church of God (Anderson, Ind.)
Church of the Nazarene
Churches of God in North America
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Congregational Christian Churches
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Disciples of Christ
Evangelical Congregational Church
Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of America
Evangelical and Reformed Church
The Evangelical United Brethren Church
Free Methodist Church of North America
The Methodist Church
Moravian Church (Southern Province)
National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.
North American Baptist General Conference
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.
The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
Primitive Methodist Church, U.S.A.
The Protestant Episcopal Church
Reformed Church in America
The Salvation Army
Seventh-day Adventists
Seventh Day Baptist General Conference
Unitarian Churches
The United Free Will Baptist Church
United Brethren in Christ
United Presbyterian Church of North America
Wesleyan Methodist Church of America

CO-OPERATING CHURCHES AND AGENCIES

The First Church of Christ, Scientist
International Society of Christian Endeavor
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
The National Lutheran Council
Southern Baptist Convention
Young Men's Christian Association

GREETINGS at Christmas from the staff of the General Commission to all our chaplain friends around the world—and all good wishes for the New Year!

COVER PICTURE: The garden and side door of the Chaplains Memorial Building, Washington, D.C.